



MARCH 1995

## NEW TO BOARD

The Task Force welcomed four new members to the board of directors at its February meeting. Appointed to fill vacancies were Rev. Robert Forte III, Consella "Peach" Trigiani, Dr. Vincent Thompson and Terri Bischoff.

Congratulations to the new board members!

## NEXT MEETING

The Task Force meets the third Wednesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. in Room 115 of College Center at Northampton Community College in Bethlehem. The next meeting is April 19.

## The Voice of the Valley

Published by  
the Lehigh Valley  
Gay and Lesbian  
Task Force  
P.O. Box 20253  
Lehigh Valley, PA  
18002-0253

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# THE VOICE OF THE VALLEY

The Newsletter of the Lehigh Valley Gay and Lesbian Task Force / Vol. 2, Issue 1

## Cammermeyer to speak here

*Task Force member instrumental in arranging her visit*

### Silent no longer, Army's top lesbian to speak April 12 in Bethlehem

Col. Margarethe Cammermeyer, the subject of a recent NBC movie, will visit the Lehigh Valley on Wednesday, April 12, to discuss her struggle to remain in the military.

Cammermeyer will speak at 7 p.m. at the theater in Northampton Hall at Northampton Community College in Bethlehem. Afterward, she will autograph her new book, *Serving in Silence*.

Both appearances are free and open to the public. The event is sponsored by the Northampton Community College Lesbian, Gay and Bi Student Union, with considerable support from the Task Force.

Renae Bennett, a member of the Task Force board of directors and president of the college's Lesbian, Gay and Bi Student Union, arranged Cammermeyer's visit.

After hearing in January that

Cammermeyer was making speaking engagements as part of her book tour, Renae began raising the \$6,000 needed to bring her to the Valley. She quickly found that a lot of local groups and businesses were willing and eager to support the project.

A fund-raiser at Diamonz during the Feb. 6 premiere of the NBC movie brought in \$200. Nine NCC student organizations, including the Student Union and the Student Senate, each kicked in funds for the project. The college itself contributed \$500. And the Task Force voted to furnish at least \$1,000, with another \$400 offered in the event some of the pledges failed to materialize in time.

Cammermeyer will speak for an hour, and then take questions from the audience. Afterward, she will sign copies of her book. Copies will be available for sale at the event.

▼ Please see CAMMERMEYER on page 2

## HATE CRIMES

Senator proposes adding sexual orientation to hate crimes law

By STEVE BLACK

Legislation that would increase penalties for crimes motivated against a person because of sexual orientation has been introduced by state Sen. David Heckler, R-Bucks County.

Sens. Roy Afflerbach, D-Lehigh/Northampton counties, and David Brightbill, R-Lebanon/Berks/Lehigh counties, have signed on to the bills as co-sponsors. Other co-sponsors so far include

Sens. William Stewart, D-Cambria County, Michael Dawida, D-Allegheny County, and Roxanne Jones, D-Philadelphia. The League of Gay and Lesbian Voters (LGLV) expects several other senators to sign on to the bills.

Sen. Heckler has been a strong supporter of the hate crimes bill in the past. He served as a co-sponsor while he was a member of the state House and also co-sponsored the bill last year. "Senator Heckler

approached LGLV about becoming the prime sponsor of this bill in this session," said Chris Young, chair of LGLV. "Heckler has been there behind the hate crimes bill since the beginning. It shows that there are Republicans who believe in the big tent."

The hate crimes bill, if passed, will increase penalties for crimes such as assault and murder which are motivated by the victim's sexual orientation.

▼ See HATE CRIMES, on page 4

# HATE CRIMES

▼ Continued from page 1

The bill also requires the state police to collect and report statistics of such crimes. In 1994, the hate crimes bill failed to be voted out of committee, despite intensive lobbying by the LGLV, when two senators, Mike Fisher, R-Allegheny County, and James Shumaker, R-Harrisburg, convinced the Judiciary Committee chair to pull the bill from the agenda.

## Postcard campaign worked

The League of Gay and Lesbian Voters generated nearly 5,000 postcards in 1994 to state senators encouraging them to support the bill. Over 300 of those cards were sent to Sen. Afflerbach.

Afflerbach's district includes parts of Lehigh County (Allentown, West Bethlehem, Catasauqua, Coopersburg, Coplay, Fountain Hill, Slatington, Whitehall, Hanover, Salisbury and Upper Saucon) and parts of Northampton County (Bath, North Catasauqua, Northampton, Walnutport, and the townships of Lehigh, Allen, East Allen, Hanover and Lower Nazareth).

"The gay and lesbian community in the Lehigh Valley did a tremendous job in signing postcards. Only two senators from Pittsburgh received more cards," said Steve Black, LGLV vice chair.

Black also believes that "Afflerbach co-sponsoring the bill is a direct result of the incredible number of postcards sent to him by his constituents."

"Brightbill was lobbied hard by LGLV last year, but never indicated whether he would be supportive. He was probably worried about his election," Black said. "His co-sponsorship, this year, came as a surprise to me."

Brightbill's district includes the Lehigh County townships of Heidelberg, Lynn, Lowhill, Weisenberg, Washington, North Whitehall, Upper Macungie and South Whitehall, and several townships in Berks County and all of Lebanon County.

## Uliana's position still unknown

Recently elected state Sen. Joe Uliana still has not stated a position on the hate crimes bill.

"I have set up a meeting with Sen. Uliana for early March. We must continue to send him cards and letters urging him to support the hate crimes bill. We must

remember that he was not in the Senate last year and he has no idea how many cards former Sen. Reibman received," Black said.

Uliana's district includes most of Northampton County, including Bethlehem, Easton, Bangor, Freemansburg, Glendon, Hellertown, Nazareth, Pen Argyl, Portland, Roseto, Stockertown, Tatamy, West Easton, Wilson, Wind Gap, and the townships of Lower Saucon, Williams, Bethlehem, Palmer, Forks, Upper Nazareth, Moore, Bushkill, Plainfield, Washington, Lower Mt. Bethel, Upper Mt. Bethel. He also represents part of Monroe County (Polk, Eldred, Ross, Hamilton and Smithfield townships, and Stroudsburg, East Stroudsburg and Delaware Water Gap.

## What can I do?

1. If you live in Heckler's, Afflerbach's or Brightbill's district, send them a note thanking them for sponsoring the hate crimes bill.

2. If you live in Uliana's district, write him a letter asking him to support the hate crimes bill, which would amend the Ethnic Intimidation Act to include sexual orientation and require the state police to collect and report statistics for such crimes.

3. All senators can be sent mail at the following address:

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
Pennsylvania State Senate  
Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0030

4. If you prefer to call your senator, use the following phone numbers:

Sen. Afflerbach:	(610) 434-3300
Sen. Heckler:	(215) 348-0600
Sen. Brightbill:	(800) 222-1897
Sen. Uliana:	(610) 865-7725

5. If you have any questions, or if you would like to become involved with the League of Gay and Lesbian Voters, call Bob Jacobs at (610) 437-2294 or Steve Black at (610) 865-7890. The Lehigh Valley Chapter of the League of Gay and Lesbian Voters meets on the fourth Monday of each month at Bob Jacobs' home, 1121 Turner St., Allentown.



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# THE WORKPLACE

## Gays and lesbians have almost no job protection in the Valley

By STEVE BLACK

Gay men and lesbians have almost no protection under the law against discrimination in the workplace.

The Lehigh Valley Gay and Lesbian Task Force sponsored a seminar on employment discrimination based on sexual orientation on Wednesday, Jan. 11. Bethlehem attorney Anne Felker, who handles a significant number of discrimination cases, addressed about 20 members of the gay and lesbian community. Ms. Felker outlined the existing laws prohibiting employment discrimination, the rights of employees and answered questions from the audience.

Ms. Felker began by summarizing Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which prohibits employment discrimination based on race, religion, national origin and sex. Sexual orientation is not included among the protected categories, so gays and lesbians are offered no protection by federal law. She noted that provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act prohibit discrimination against people with AIDS/HIV or those perceived to have AIDS/HIV. So if a gay man is discriminated against in the workplace because he is thought to have AIDS/HIV, even though he does not, he most likely would be protected by federal law.

At the state level, Ms. Felker explained that Pennsylvania law, like that of most other states, has "At-Will" employment. Under this doctrine, an employer may fire any employee for any reason, at any time, including the employee's sexual orientation. "You can be fired for good reason, bad reason, or no reason at all," said Felker. The only exceptions to the "At-Will" employment are the protected categories under the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act, which like federal law only includes race, sex, religion and national origin. Another

possible exception to "At-Will" employment, according to Felker, would be the "just cause" provision of a union contract which requires that an employee be terminated only for job-related causes.

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**'You can be fired for good reason, bad reason, or no reason at all.'**

**- Anne Felker**

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At the local level, five cities in Pennsylvania have laws prohibiting discrimination on basis of sexual orientation in employment. These are Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, Lancaster, and York. No municipality in the Lehigh Valley has such an ordinance.

Ms. Felker advised employees who feel they are being discriminated against to keep notes, records or diaries of events, meetings, comments of supervisors and incidents in the workplace. "If you are called into a meeting, ask if you can tape record it. If they say no, ask if you can take notes, then write everything down on paper," she advised. Employers often try to bury discrimination claims under a mass of paper records; by keeping notes or diaries, you are creating your own paper trail that can be used as evidence in a discrimination suit.

Ms. Felker commented on the eternal dilemma of gay and lesbian employees: Should I "come out" at work. Ms. Felker said that employees who have made their sexual orientation known at work may have more protection than those who remain in the workplace closet. She reasoned that the employer then could not defend a charge of discrimination based on the argument that he/she did not know of the person's sexual orientation. She added that many

employers mistakenly believe that it is illegal to fire someone because they are gay or lesbian.

After Ms. Felker's presentation LVGLTF Discrimination Committee Co-Chair, Steve Black announced the Task Force's incident reporting procedures. The Task Force has developed a set of forms for gays and lesbians who have been discriminated against to report these incidents. Forms to report employment discrimination, housing discrimination, and bias crimes and harassment. The Task Force will address as many incidents as it can. LVGLTF will also use the information from the reporting forms to show public officials, police, media and the general population the existence and extent of discrimination and its effect on its victims. LVGLTF is also developing a referral list of attorneys, doctors, and psychologists who are gay and lesbian positive and whose practices deal with these issues.

LVGLTF reminds the community, that if we remain silent, we will continue to be victims. To achieve equality gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people must fight each incident of discrimination as individuals and as a community. To report incidents of discrimination, harassment or bias crimes, please call the Lehigh Valley Gay and Lesbian Task Force's Hotline at (610) 515-1551.

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**Employers often try to bury discrimination claims under a mass of paper records; by keeping notes or diaries, you are creating your own paper trail that can be used as evidence in a discrimination suit.**

# IN CONGRESS

## McHale vows not to discriminate in his congressional office

Lehigh Valley Congressman Paul McHale has added his name to a statement affirming that sexual orientation is not a consideration in hiring, firing or promoting employees within his congressional office.

The statement was circulated by the Human Rights Campaign Fund, the largest national gay and lesbian lobbying organization. McHale added his name after meeting with HRCF lobbyist Nancy Buermeyer.

State Black, vice chair of the League of Gay and Lesbian Voters, said, "McHale's action is a result of the significant number of letters generated through the FAN computer letters program, where volunteers from the LGLV and the Task Force staffed a computer at Diamonz and Stonewall asking patrons to write letters

to our representatives. McHale now knows that the gay and lesbian community in the Lehigh Valley exists and its politically aware."

HRCF has asked Lehigh Valley residents to send a letter to McHale thanking him for signing the nondiscrimination statement. Letters should be addressed to The Honorable Paul McHale, 26 E. Third St., Bethlehem, PA 18015. If you wish to call, McHale's office phone number is (610) 866-0916.

McHale has previously indicated in letters to gay and lesbian constituents that he will vote in favor of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act when it comes to the House floor for a vote.

# MEDIA WATCH

## Task Force, others rap Morning Call for anti-gay hysteria in Austin case

The Lehigh Valley was shocked and saddened to learn that a 26-year-old man had beat to death the baby he had through a surrogate mother.

But an even bigger shock came when police searched the home of the father, James A. Austin, and discovered he had a collection of gay pornography and videotapes. The news media pounced on the story.

Headlines like the Morning Call's "Gay porn videos, magazines confiscated at Austin home" made it seem that Austin's sexual orientation was somehow related to the tragic death of his 5-week-old infant.

"I don't think anything that has been in the Call has been that negative," said Chris Ackner, vice president of the Task Force.

The Task Force responded immediately to take the Call to task for its sensationalist and homophobic presentation of the news.

Rather than marches or protests, which the news media might have employed to make it appear that the gay community was rallying to Austin's side, Task Force members wrote letters to the editor explaining the facts of the situation.

The Call printed letters from Task Force President Manny Gonzalez and Discrimination Committee Co-Chairperson Renae Bennett.

We were surprised to find that many people outside the gay and lesbian community felt the way we did. One Allentown man wrote to complain that the Call's lurid headlines only damaged the good reputations of two gay neighbors of his, both of whom do more than many "straight" neighbors to improve the neighborhood. A woman from Allentown said the Call's report "only creates more hate in a hate-filled world against gays. The last thing we need in this town is more gay bashing!"

The Express-Times of Easton published the same story. Its headline also capitalized on the gay pornography theme, and the lead aimed at sensationalism: "Gay pornographic videotapes with titles such as 'Locker Room Fever,' 'Guys Who Do' and 'Hot Hunks' were found along with books such as 'Living with Your New Baby' and 'Miracle of Birth' when police searched the home of James Alan Austin."

In this case, however, the reporter interviewed Task Force president Manuel Gonzalez about the tie

between being gay and being a parent. Manny pointed out that police seized the pornographic items without explaining their relevance to the case.

The Austin case attracted attention far beyond the Lehigh Valley, as The Advocate, the national gay and lesbian news magazine, reported in its March 7 edition.

The magazine said that "it seems likely that conservative groups will use the incident as a means to push for legal restrictions on the use of alternative reproductive techniques by anyone other than married couples."

Legislation is being prepared in the Pennsylvania Legislature to make all surrogacy contracts in the state nonbinding, and surrogacy opponents are watching to see how the Austin case turns out.

Arthur Caplan, director of the Center for Bioethics at the University of Pennsylvania, told The Advocate, "If this guy turns out to be gay and he murdered the baby, I would go so far as to predict that we will see a ban on commercial surrogacy in Pennsylvania by the end of this legislative session and will at least see a bill introduced that would ban gay and single parents from access to surrogacy."

# THE ARTS

## *Women's chorus plans concerts, looking for additional singers*

Perhaps you have seen a bookmark in local stores inscribed with this statement:

Devoted to musical excellence, ACCO celebrates women's culture through the power and passion and discovery of women's music. Named for the pre-Hellenic goddess, ACCO is an ensemble of women singing the voice of creation, engaging their audience in the creation and re-creation of community.

These words describe ACCO, a Chorus Celebrating Women. We've been growing since 1992 and now number 22 talented women. You might have heard us sing at Mayfair or at the candlelight vigil for Turning Point. Perhaps you caught one of our Winter Solstice concerts in 1993 or 1994. If you haven't heard us yet, you may want to come to the Unitarian Church in Bethlehem on March 26 or pencil in your calendar for our June 3 concert.

As we are advocates of music by women, we always

perform at least one piece by a woman composer that is seldom, if ever, been heard before. A contemporary writer, Stephanie Maria de Kenessey, is our choice this time. We'll be also singing songs on nature, songs by Alaskan Libby Roderick, "Simply Love" by Holly Near, "Marie" by Laura Berkson and an emotionally charged piece by Rhiannon entitled "Somo Tejedoras."

We would like more people to know about us, to hear us, to join us as volunteers. We would like to know you, to sing the music of your life as a Jew, African-American, Latino, Caucasian, heterosexual, bisexual, lesbian, Muslim ... If you would like to sing in the chorus we will hear you. We have openings in the second alto section and in the first and second soprano sections. If you're a first alto, never fear, we'll make room for you. Although we will hear auditions again after June, you can call artistic director Beverly Morgan now at (610) 760-1759 for information.

## STRESSED OUT

### *Feeling overwhelmed? Here are some tips to cope with tensions*

By JACQUELINE MARISH, M.A.  
Counselor

All of us have known stress and some of us have known burnout. Burnout occurs when stress has reached a point of overwhelming us. This happens when we don't pay attention to the stressors as they are building up.

Many of us tend to deny the impact of stress events (stressors) and figure that a good night's sleep or a day off will allow us to bounce back. This will result if we have not allowed too many stressors to build.

Daily life has stressors built into it. If we have good coping skills we are able to release the daily stressors. If not, they build up and then extra stressors come along and soon we're recognizing that we're "stressed out."

Living in a hierarchical society will always be stressful because of the rigid rules, rigid roles, ranking of people, and dictated perceptions of value, worth and success. A hierarchical society by its very name means only certain people count; all others are less-than.

Being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender in a heterosexual society means daily life is compounded intensely with stressors.

Some common symptoms of stress are:

1. feeling tired even after a good night's sleep;
2. little things bother you more than they used to;
3. the job you are doing is lacking in personal meaning;
4. you neglect to do the things you enjoy;
5. being forgetful;
6. change in appetite;
7. mood swings or outburst of emotion;
8. withdrawing from social situations; and
9. experiencing frequent illnesses..

A brief list of coping mechanisms to employ when we recognize that we're experiencing stress:

1. make time for friends;
2. humor is essential, we need to laugh;
3. take quiet time for yourself;

4. develop friendships with positive people;
5. confide in someone you can trust to keep your confidence;
6. give yourself a pep talk;
7. smile at yourself in the mirror;
8. smile at others;
9. spend time with nature;
10. keep a written list of all your accomplishments;
11. quit doing something (at least for one or two months);
12. see mistakes as missed-takes;
13. stop criticizing yourself and others;
14. accept that you can't control everything;
15. recognize that perfection is a trap;
16. don't harp on the past;
17. alcohol produces stress and tension, so beware;
18. eat at least one balanced meal a day;
19. go to bed and get up at the same time every day;
20. drink more water;
21. cut down on caffeine; and
22. consider professional guidance.

## JOIN US...

... in making the Lehigh Valley a better and safer place to live. You can help by becoming a member of the Task Force.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Municipality (City, borough, township) \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

**\$15 Basic membership**

Benefits: mailing list, referral database, volunteer opportunities, lesbian and gay community information, newsletter, a vote in meetings.

**\$10 Student or senior member**

Benefits: Same as above. However, students under 18 do not vote.

**\$25 Family membership**

Benefits: Same as basic member. This category is for domestic partners and their children living in the same household. Each person gets 1 vote, for a maximum of 2 votes per family. Children under 18 do not vote.

**\$30 Organizational member**

Benefits: newsletter, referral database, free listing in newsletter. No vote.

**Contributor**

Help the Task Force pay for mailings and other start-up expenses. Your donations would be very much appreciated.

I'd like to get involved in a Task Force committee:

- Communications
- Discrimination
- Fundraising
- Membership
- Nominations
- Systems and Structure
- Youth Issues

Make check or money order payable to:

LVGLTF

P.O. Box 20253

Lehigh Valley, PA 18002-0253

## Coming attractions

### Pride schedules festival for June 11

Pride of the Lehigh Valley will present its second annual Pride Fest on Sunday, June 11, at Cedar Beach Park, off Linden Street in Allentown.

Last year's event was a smashing success, with more than 700 people taking part. The full day of activities included musical performances, volleyball, information booths, food and beverages, and more.

### ASC 'Star Server' dinner scheduled for April 30

Want to be waited on hand and foot?

Attend AIDS Service Center's Star Servers fund-raising dinner on Sunday, April 30, at the Allentown Hilton on Hamilton Street in Allentown. Cocktails start at 6:30 p.m., with dinner beginning at 7.

It's a chance to mingle, dress up in your favorite get-up and have fun. Volunteer waiters and waitresses will dress up and cater to your every whim (well, not every). There will also be a silent

### Get the word out!

Do you want to reach the Lehigh Valley gay community with your product or service? An advertisement in The Voice of the Valley is the way to go.

The Task Force newsletter is distributed to members and patrons of gay-friendly establishments in Lehigh and Northampton counties. Total circulation is 1,000.

#### Advertising rates

Full page	\$150
Half page	\$75
Quarter page	\$50
Business card	\$25

#### Advertising deadlines

Spring edition	April 15
Summer issue	June 15

To place an ad, call 691-7653.

### What's happening in the Lehigh Valley

auction of services, gift certificates and items.

Tickets are \$20 per person. Want to go as a group? Buy a table for 10 people.

If you wish to volunteer to wait on tables, attend a meeting at 7 p.m. Thursday, March 30, at the ASC, 60 W. Broad St., Suite 205, Bethlehem. For more information, call Aida at ASC at (610) 974-8701.

### Church plans special Easter, Lent services

The Metropolitan Community Church will have a special Easter worship at 7 p.m. Sunday, April 16, at St. John's United Church of Christ, Sixth and Walnut streets, Allentown.

During Lent, Pastor Peter Helt will present a special series of sermons on "A Cloud of Witnesses - People Who Jesus Touched." The series will look at a variety of people in the Gospels and how their meeting Jesus transformed their lives forever.

For further information, call Pastor Helt at (610) 439-8755.

### Therapist to speak at lesbian group April 20

Mary Kiernan, a therapist, will speak at the next meeting of the Lehigh Valley Lesbians at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 20, in the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley, 701 Lechauweki Ave., Fountain Hill.

Mary will explain how people can use creative visualization for personal growth and developing relationships.

The Lehigh Valley Lesbians meets on the third Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Church. In addition, a women's support group meets every other Friday.

For further information, call Linda Mich at (610) 253-5454.